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Evaluating the impact of a pedagogical intervention to address LGBTQ diversity in the social work curriculum

Legislative changes in Britain:

1535 Buggery Act (brought sodomy within the scope of statute law for the first time and made it punishable by hanging.)

1950 United Charter for Human Rights

1967 Sexual offences against the person's Act (decriminalised homosexual acts amongst consenting adults of over 21 in private)

1994 Gay male age of consent reduced to 18

2001 Gay male age of consent equalised to 16

2002 Adoption and Children Act (gives non married couples including same sex couples right to jointly apply to adopt.)

2003 Repeal of Section 28

2003 The Employment Equality Regulations

2004 Gender reassignment recognition Act

2008 The Criminal Justice and Immigration Act makes 'incitement to homophobic hatred' a crime.

2009 Age of consent equalised to 16 in Northern Ireland

2010 The Equality Act

2013 The Marriage (same Sex Couples) Act

Project team:



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The study aims:

- To explore the attitudes and knowledge of first year undergraduate social work students' in a London University, towards the LGBTQ community.
- To measure if their attitudes have changed and to explore the students' beliefs as to which, if any, areas of the curriculum affected their change in attitudes.
- To catalogue and describe aspects of the curriculum which aim to develop the students' understanding and skills in order to enhance their capacity to work with the LGBTQ community and to disseminate good practice.

Method

- A mixed methods approach.
- Students will be given a standardised questionnaire to measure their knowledge and attitudes about LGBT.
- The questionnaire will be administered at the beginning of first year and again at the end of their first year.
- The sample will include approximately 50 students.

The project will be carried out over a 2 year period initially, with the aim of exploring the possibility of a longitudinal study.

A focus group will be set up to explore which, if any, of the curriculum affected their attitudes.

The Measuring Scale

'Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale (LGB-KAS) for Heterosexuals'

The 'Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale (LGB-KAS) for Heterosexuals' (Worthington, Dillon & Becker-Schutte, 2005) was chosen from review of seventeen (17) relevant instruments measuring attitudes and perceptions towards LGBT groups. Five (5) factors assessing internalised affirmativeness, civil rights attitudes, knowledge, religious conflict, and hate indicated that heterosexual knowledge and attitudes regarding LGBT individuals could be conceptualized as multidimensional and wide-ranging. Test retest stability, internal consistency, and validity coefficients supported its usage and continued development. The statements, partially reflecting the recent shift in societal attitudes towards LGBT individuals were deemed appropriate for administering to the cohort of Social Work students.

Worthington, R. L., Dillon, F. R., & Becker-Schutte, A. M. (2005). Development, Reliability, and Validity of the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Knowledge and Attitudes Scale for Heterosexuals (LGB-KASH). Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52(1), 104)

BA Social Work first year curriculum

Introduces students to foundation social work knowledge, values and skills and equips student to be ready to practice on placement in 2nd and 3rd year.

It aims to develop professional identities using mixed pedagogic approaches.

It includes:

- Awareness of anti discriminatory practice
- Increase students' awareness of LGBTQ people as a non-homogenous community
- Diversity is "ordinary"
- Legislative framework that protects rights of people with different sexualities and authenticates lifestyles of people with different sexualities.
- Sexuality as a constructed phenomena
- Maps professional values to valuing diversity

Social Work profesional standards

Social Work is a professional qualification, which must adhere to the following standards:

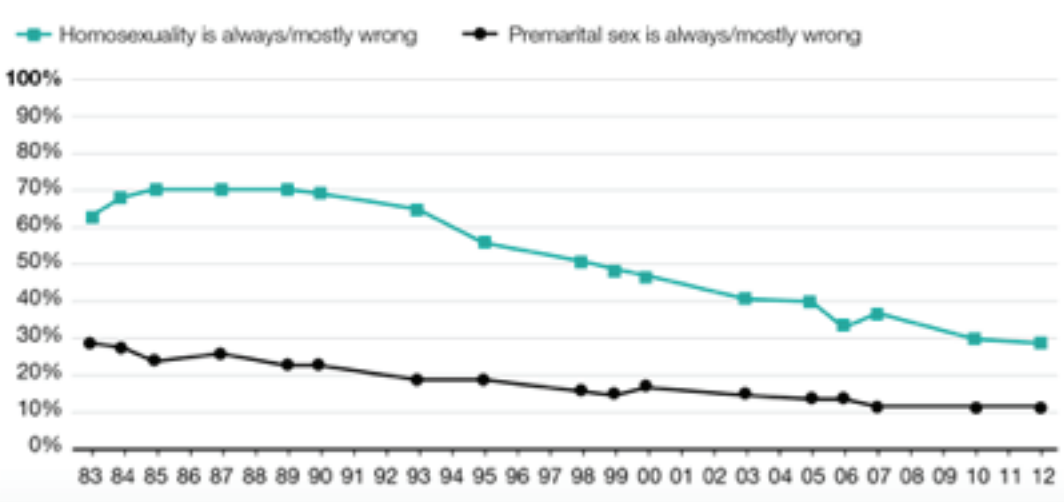
- 2** Be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession.
- 2.7** Understand the need to respect and up hold the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of every service user and carer.
- 6** Be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner
- 6.1** Be able to work with others to promote social justice, equality and inclusion
- 6.2** Be able to use practice to challenge and address the impact of discrimination, disadvantage and oppression

(HCPC Standards of Proficiency Social Workers in England)

Societal attitudes changing

Although tolerance of homosexuality has grown among all religious groups, it has grown most among those who are not religious

Figure 1.4 Views on premarital sex and homosexuality, 1983-2012



Natcen Social research 30th edn British Social Attitudes
<http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-30/personal-relationships/homosexuality.aspx> (accessed 2.3.16)

Homophobia in HEIs

LGB students:

- 64% were not out to lecturers for fear of discrimination
- 49.5% experienced negative treatment due to sexuality from other students and 10.4% from lecturers.

Equality Challenge Unit (2009) The experience of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans staff and students in higher education. Research report.